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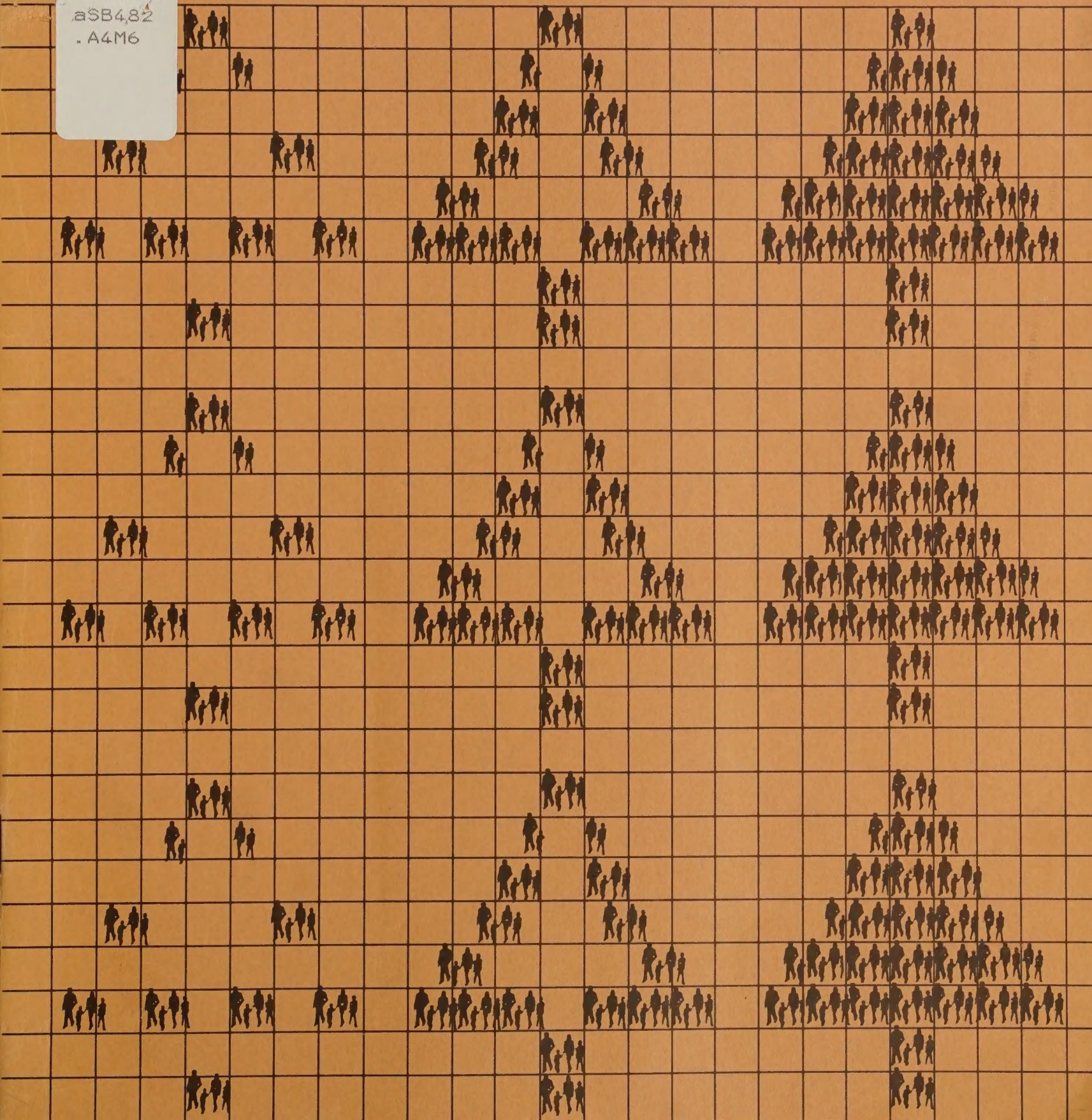
Forest
Service



A Guide to Effective Interpretation

What the Forest Service Can
Learn from Marketing Research

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More, Muriel E.
A guide to effective
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July 1983

A GUIDE TO EFFECTIVE INTERPRETATION

What the Forest Service Can Learn
From Marketing Research

By
Muriel E. More

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Department of Forestry and Wildlife Management, University of
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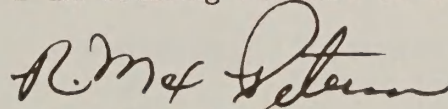
Several years ago, the U.S. Forest Service asked Muriel More, then working on her Ph.D. in forestry at the University of Massachusetts, to develop an annotated bibliography that related marketing techniques to interpretation techniques. We felt that because these professions are so closely related, Interpretative Services might be able to benefit from a close look at marketing techniques. We were not interested in using the "hard sell" techniques often associated with Madison Avenue and marketing, but did feel that some techniques could be used in a much softer interpretive approach to help people better understand who the Forest Service is, how we manage forest resources, and why we do things the way we do.

After Dr. More completed her work and before we could get it published, the USDA guidelines for publication changed. We could not use the manuscript in its original format, so we contracted with SSR, Incorporated, of Washington, D.C., to rewrite and reformat the original work. While the work is Muriel More's, much credit must go to SSR for its work in sorting through the vast amount of annotated information and references in the original work and rearranging it creatively without significant loss of content.

The pages from a booklet on the Flaming Gorge area of Wyoming and Utah are reprinted with permission of the Flaming Gorge Natural History Association. All other reprints of illustrations are from the U.S. Forest Service.

We recommend this publication to you in light of the new emphasis for Interpretive Services as expressed in our August 1982 Interpretive Services Task Force Report and the interest of the Secretary of Agriculture in helping people better understand who we are and how we can sustain commodity production without depreciating our resources. We feel that proper application of these techniques should improve our service to the public and help them better understand the Forest Service.

I am looking forward to seeing these techniques in action.



R. MAX PETERSON
Chief

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INTRODUCTION

Marketing! The term conjures up visions of Madison Avenue, advertising, TV commercials, and used-car salesmen -- visions unpopular with many Forest Service people, if not most of them, and is certainly not the kind of image we want to show the public. And yet, at least one private forestry company is using marketing techniques to achieve a favorable image as a tree-growing company that provides a variety of benefits -- wildlife, recreation, scenic beauty and trees -- from forested land. If a company can use these techniques to softly sell the positive aspects of its operation, perhaps the Forest Service can, too.

This guide looks at a variety of ideas, techniques, and concepts from the broad field of marketing that could be useful to Interpretive Services and the Forest Service. Like people in the marketing profession, we approach the topic from the public's point of view, asking ourselves: What does the public not understand, and who among the public does not understand this?

By carefully analyzing marketing philosophies, you can select those marketing strategies that fit your needs, increase public understanding of your service, and improve service to the public. Some of you will recognize these techniques, because the Forest Service has, in fact, been using them for years. Many of you will be pleased to find your own ideas confirmed by research. Most of you will find something new to increase your effectiveness.

People who visit the Forests are "consumers" of products. On a daily basis, they "consume" automobiles, soap, and TV dinners. When they visit the Forests, they also "consume" quiet camping spots, long walks in the forest, publications, tours, white-water rafting, hunting, bird watching, and the myriad of services we provide. While visiting the Forests, they certainly also "consume" experiences, ideas, and feelings. We are their hosts helping them have a complete, enjoyable, and safe experience even as we protect the resource from their use.

As a Forest Service manager or interpreter, you must determine how you can convey your ideas to these visitors most effectively. A communication strategy must be planned and constructed rationally, phrased concisely and explicitly, and presented in a way that invites listening, interacting, and learning. Possible ramifications should be carefully considered.

We hope this publication will add to your repertoire for communicating with the public. The first seven chapters will help you define what to say, who to say it to, and how to say it most efficiently. The last chapter and the appendix give you

information on how to evaluate and analyze your program. The bibliography will be of aid to those who want to pursue some of these ideas further.

Use this publication as a guide. Take what you need. Modify where necessary. Improve your service to the public.

1. THE MESSAGE: WHAT DO I WANT TO SAY?

Deciding what you want to say is as important as who you want to say it to. The two decisions are often made simultaneously. Certainly they are inseparable.

You probably already know in a general way what you want to say. But to be able to communicate effectively, you must focus clearly on your message and decide on the impact you want it to have.(33)

To help clarify your message, first define your products or services. What do you have to offer the public? Marketing experts have analyzed a wide range of circumstances and found that they fall into one or more of four situations. Ask yourself the following questions:

- (1) Do I want to serve an audience by responding to a demand or need for interpretive products and services?(33)
- (2) Do I want to build a demand for a particular recreation experience? Or do I want to create a demand for an activity or service where none existed before?(33)



A POSITIVE MESSAGE. Basically a list of do's and don'ts, this poster's "instructional" approach gives clear, useful, and important information without commanding. The illustrations on the actual poster are printed in soft colors that reinforce the nonthreatening message.

- (3) Do I want to reduce a demand for a recreation experience?(33)
- (4) Do I want to encourage people to change a behavior or an attitude?(33)

Make your message substantive and positive. Say what you mean, and mean what you say.(64) Reinforce favorable images. A message will be remembered better if it is important or pleasant than if it is trivial or threatening.(4)

2. THE AUDIENCE: WHO DO I WANT TO GET MY MESSAGE?

Some researchers view the market for outdoor recreation as a "market in motion" requiring virtually everything needed at home, including food, shelter, fuel, and amusement.(58) To make your messages most effective, it is important to aim them at specific groups of users within this market. Each group is an audience actively pressing for its own goals. You must be able to plan to meet the needs of each group.

If you know an audience's characteristics, what they already know about recreation opportunities or services, and what they want from them, you will be able to understand what they want or need to know as consumers. So start where each audience is. Understanding each one is essential.(2,4)

Here we can learn something from marketing techniques. Recognizing that people differ in their interests, marketers divide consumers into interest groups so that they can clearly focus their sales efforts. This is known as market segmentation. The principle behind it is to understand how the various groups perceive and react to products and services, as well as to stay alert to changing trends and patterns.(4,18) After all, it is easier to understand and communicate with a small group of people with common characteristics than with a large one with disparate characteristics.

Just as marketers have long known that an appeal directed to a specific audience is more effective than a broad appeal to the public at large, interpretive messages directed to specific groups stand a better chance of acceptance by their intended audiences. For example, visitors in a hurry or with young children respond readily to exhibits they can absorb at a glance. Hour-long interpretive walks attract one kind of visitor, conducted day-long excursions attract another kind.(50)

There is no one right way to segment an audience. You can use a number of variables(4,18,24,40,44,50,58,59,62,65), but the choice is up to you. Most variables used in marketing fall into the following categories:

- (1) Geographic -- Classifying audiences by location or place of residence, perhaps by region, city size, or area of population density, such as urban, suburban, or rural.(5) The distance that visitors have to travel to get to your facility, for example, has a definite bearing on how long they will stay, what sort of accommodations they will need in your area, and whether or not they are likely to return soon.
- (2) Demographic -- Categorizing audiences by age, sex, family size, income, occupation, education, and family life

cycle. Whether young or old, male or female, married or unmarried, rich or poor, laborer or professional, high school or college graduate, newlywed or established family -- each has specific needs and interests.(4,18,65)

- (3) Psychographic -- Dividing an audience by its members' customs, attitudes, and behavior patterns(4,35,68) -- that is, varying life styles,(44,50) personalities, motivations, frequency and intensity of use,(40,42) and consumption of goods and services.(8,59,65) The last is closely tied to a consumer's life-cycle status (that is, family and occupation status) and age.

Some marketers also segment audience according to product use,(40) benefits received,(24,59,65) perception of brands, brand loyalty,(18) and the extent to which they carry their home environments with them -- for example, in cars versus fully equipped trailers.(58)

In most situations, however, you will probably segment your audience by combining some of the components in the three categories. For example, you might find that a certain interpretive program attracts mostly young, educated couples with small children who live in the same geographic area, visit often, and enjoy tent camping. The people in such a group are likely to respond to a different message than a group made up of tourists who are retired, have no children, and camp in trailers or motor homes.

Since consumers generally seek a variety of benefits from products and services and often rate some more important than others,(24) you can identify user segments by examining different benefits accrued from a product and cross-tabulating them with various forms of behavior and demographic variables to yield a detailed profile of each segment.(59)

Studies show that expenditures for medical care and such luxuries as alcoholic beverages, gifts, and contributions are related to age -- more so than they are to life cycle. But life cycle is more of a clue to the purchase of products and services related to the presence of children and their activities.(69)

Marketing studies also show that self-sufficient people with strong, inner values are more likely to espouse wilderness causes and visit wilderness areas than the more compliant, socially oriented individuals who tend to depend on others for direction.(62)

People who prefer fantasy or comedy TV like television a lot but show little interest in the print media. You can probably



KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE. The direct, simple message of this poster would appeal to persons seeking a change from crowded urban areas. Wilderness enthusiasts, in particular, would respond positively. Those interested in the more social aspects of camping might not.

reach these people with advertisements that take a slice-of-life approach. This is because research shows these people are typically traditional in their views, regard their lives as personal and financial defeats, and are price conscious, bargain seekers.(66)

Talk-show audiences, on the other hand, say they need excitement. They transmit information and seek out and talk about new products. They take a strong interest in fashion and personal appearance. They could respond to a zest-for-life approach in a commercial on your interpretive program.(66)

According to other research, avid magazine readers are very interested in classical music, art, ecology, long walks, and sports. Their families travel a lot and are economically secure. Less avid magazine readers are homebodies. They believe in store brands, trust their friends' recommendations, distrust big companies, see a need for discipline, and want job security.(50)

Here are some general research findings about the characteristics of campers that may be helpful to you.

One study of a nationwide sample of households identified three major market segments -- active campers, temporarily inactive campers, and prospective campers; twelve image factors were then studied for each group. Seven concerned the image of camping's attraction (it is fun, inexpensive, interesting, etc.) and five the image of the camping environment (it's clean, safe, uncrowded, etc.). The findings show that the image of camping's attractions was more favorable than the image of the camping environment itself. Indeed, substantial numbers of both active campers and ex-campers described camping as expensive, dirty, crowded, and inconvenient; two out of five saw it as crowded. Among demographic and psychographic characteristics, only age was significantly related to image, with camping having the greatest appeal to household heads under 30 years of age.(41)

In a New Hampshire State Park study, campers were divided into light and heavy users according to days of camping. Although heavy users accounted for only half the sample, they camped three times more frequently, had larger investments in camping equipment, and spent three times as much on camping as light users. They were also more spontaneous in choosing a campground.(40)

Looking at the heavy users in more detail, findings indicate that this group accounts for 73 percent to 85 percent of all camp days. Moreover, heavy users have a higher evidence of membership in camping clubs, prefer private campgrounds, and enjoy the social aspects of camping more than light users. And they are usually active in several forms of outdoor recreation.(42)

Other research compared nonimpulse campers with impulse campers and found out that the latter account for one-half of all camping activity. They are more likely than nonimpulse campers to be in a campground for the first time but have less intention of returning. Impulse campers rate convenience as the most important factor in selecting a campground and have higher average daily expenses.(43)

The characteristics of people camping in your area may differ significantly from these examples, particularly at specific times of the year. The concept of segmenting your audiences, however, should help you assess just who your campers -- or recreation-users -- are. Using this information, you could choose materials and methods of presentation that will both retain current campers as well as attract new ones.

To increase camping, for example, you might develop marketing strategies that respond to the specific images -- the attractive and the unattractive -- held by the public.(4) The findings also suggest that to reach the people who use campgrounds most frequently, you only have to reach half of the people who camp. And you can get messages to these heavy-use campers by advertising in magazines read by campers and distributing campground brochures at outdoor shows and equipment dealers.(40)

To increase camping by heavy campers, you could send flyers to those who spend 21 days or more in your area.(40) To increase camping by the public-at-large, your message might emphasize the inexpensive, clean, convenient, and uncrowded camp sites at your facility.(41)

Studies show that marketing specialists consider knowledge of user groups a critical, basic ingredient in planning and evaluating marketing programs or strategies. The same kind of information can help you in appealing to various groups of visitors. You can also use it to develop new programs or change existing ones to attract other people.

In summary, market segmentation can enable the Forest Service manager to:

- (1) Understand better the different kinds of visitors to the facility.(7,24,65)
- (2) Design the words in messages to reach each segment of visitors.(24,50)
- (3) Determine the medium or media that will present the message best to each group.(24,50)
- (4) Make appropriate changes in current interpretive products or services.(24)
- (5) Expand opportunities to reach current and new visitors.(24)

3. THE MEDIUM -- HOW SHALL I PACKAGE THE INFORMATION?

By now you may not only know what you want to say, but you may have a good idea of what your different audience segments are like. You may even have some idea about how you might deliver your message. Since many perceptual, emotional, and physical factors affect audience receptivity, what is the best way to get your message across? What should it look or sound like? How long should it be?

The choices may seem so numerous and involve so many factors that your task appears staggering. But look at it as an opportunity: You have an infinite variety of tools that you can apply to enhance and convey your message, and marketing research on the relative effectiveness of these tools is available for your use. Frequently, for example, people stop to look at an exhibit, press a button to get a recorded message, but leave before the tape is finished. Research shows that in all likelihood, the message was either too long or poorly designed for its intended audience. This guide will help you circumvent such problems.

In general, people remember one strong concept from a message. Two major elements -- presentation and design -- determine how well your message attracts and holds people's attention, and whether or not the concept elicits the response you seek.(13)

Thus, once you have decided who your audience is and what you want to accomplish with your message, you should concentrate on the job of communicating the message through design and presentation. And while you are doing it, try to build a means of evaluating your efforts so you can find out how effectively you are meeting your objectives. (Chapter 8 and the appendix contain further information on evaluating effectiveness.)

Message presentation involves such factors as the medium -- audio, visual, or a combination of both(8,31) -- and the mood you set -- formal, informal, analytical, factual, objective, subjective.(1,20,29,31)

Message design is dictated by such factors as form and color; line, shape, and texture; and text, typeface, and illustration. For example, color: Colors are odorless, but colors can suggest odors. They may also attract attention, arouse emotion, make you hungry, and suggest weight.(1,10,12,60)

Length of a verbal message: Short ones are generally the most effective, yet you must give your audience at least 5 to 10 seconds to transfer one chunk of information from short-term message to long-term memory if you want your message to stay with the viewers. Key factors in information processing are attention, memory, and evaluative-processing demands. How much

a person already knows about a subject also affects learning.(2) Product familiarity, incidentally, is important to acceptance and purchase, particularly when introducing a new product.(3)

In one study of television commercials, message recall was best with a 1-minute commercial, almost as good with a 30-second commercial, and poorest with the 20-second commercial. Apparently the difference between 20 and 30 seconds in this study was critical in establishing a commercial's message clearly in a listener's mind. Thus, 30 seconds was shown to be the optimum length of time for a TV commercial.(3)

In another study, different groups of subjects watched a 30-minute television show that had three to nine advertising commercials, each 10 to 60 seconds long, occurring at the beginning, middle, or end. Results indicate that recall was better the longer a commercial was shown. People also remembered more with fewer commercials. Position of the commercial was not significantly related to recall, although viewers tended to recall a commercial at the beginning and end of a program better than if it was in the middle.(70)

Among those listening to a recorded music concert -- an audio audience -- the percentage of inattentiveness rose from 19 percent after 5 minutes, to 66 percent after 10 minutes, to 82 percent after 20 minutes. With a lecture audience the proportion rose from 27 percent in attentiveness after 5 minutes, to 52 percent after 10 minutes, to 61 percent after 20 minutes. Attentiveness perked up after a half-hour.(3)

Presentation

Subject matter, props, lighting, and environment -- all can determine the mood in which the presentation is made.(1) The forms of the presentation are the media, and include printed matter (such as brochures, flyers, signs, and posters), voice, (live or recorded), and projected film slides, motion pictures, and television. Slides are a particularly good way to supplement a print or audio exhibit visually and inexpensively.(31)

In deciding what media to employ, consider:

- (1) The kind or combination of media that will best reach your intended audience.
- (2) The room your audience will have in which to absorb your message.
- (3) The time your audience will have to absorb your message.
- (4) The degree of recall that is important.

The words, pictures, forms, colors, lines, shapes, and textures used in advertising all have symbolic meaning(1,3,4,19) and are often superior to verbal communication.(23) They can convey a feeling, an atmosphere, or emotion. Pictures in particular have a great impact on communication at the subconscious level, with the same picture taking on different meanings depending on its context. Certain words, in turn, can make powerful picture associations, for example, love, home, war, and laughter.(1)

In advertising, the play between words and pictures usually produces a single, overall impression. Not only is the interplay of the parts important but so is the environment in which it appears. All have an important effect on the image the ad creates.(1)

Important factors influencing media choice are as follows:

- (1) Audience selectivity -- the media mix that best reaches the intended audience.(8)
- (2) Intrusiveness -- the extent to which you want to reach people not actively seeking your product or service information.(8)
- (3) Sensory modality -- how will the message reach the person -- eye, ear, etc.(8)
- (4) Existence in space or time -- print transmits words, pictures, and color; audio carries words and sounds. Print has permanence and permits each viewer to read words and interpret pictures at an individual pace at the Forest Service facility or at home; audio messages often must be heard at the convenience of the sender and at the sender's pace.(4,8) Television and motion pictures combine words, pictures, color, and sound, plus motion.

In general remember that people recall brief, simple messages directed to both eye and ear more readily than messages sent to either eye or ear alone. But they remember messages directed to the ear alone better than those sent only to the eye. A taped message is more persuasive than print, but in the final analysis, a person face to face with an audience is more persuasive than either a voice tape or a printed version of the same message.(8)

A number of strategies increase the ease with which people withdraw and retain information in a message. Consider using any or all of the following techniques as often as possible.

- (1) Present information that satisfies the viewer's concerns.(12)

- (2) Give information that is easy to learn.(12,21)
- (3) Place key information at the beginning or the end of the message.(12)
- (4) Arrange to get the viewer physically or mentally involved (or both) in the learning process.(12)
- (5) Make the information meaningful.(12)
- (6) Keep the message simple.(8,12,21)
- (7) Make the message believable.(21)
- (8) Make the tone positive.(20)

The message will also be better remembered if it is attractive. In one study, for example, a significant number of people were attracted to a display that used a scenic background to accompany price information. Of those that stopped to look at the display, a large percentage remembered the price.(61)

Marketing research shows the essentials of a good display to be as follows:

- (1) It is distinctive and dramatic, arousing attention and interest through the coordination of color, lines, arrangement of objects, lighting, motion, etc.(11)
- (2) It is pleasing and appropriate, with all elements in harmony and unified.(11)
- (3) It is simple. The message is quickly received and assimilated; that is, it is neither overcrowded nor contains too many nonrelated items.(11)
- (4) It is developed around a central theme.(11)
- (5) It shows objects in use -- by arrangements, pictures, demonstrations, motion, etc.(11)
- (6) It is neat and clean.(11)

When you think you are finished, ask yourself if you can omit anything without impairing the message. When in doubt, leave it out. You'll probably sharpen the presentation.

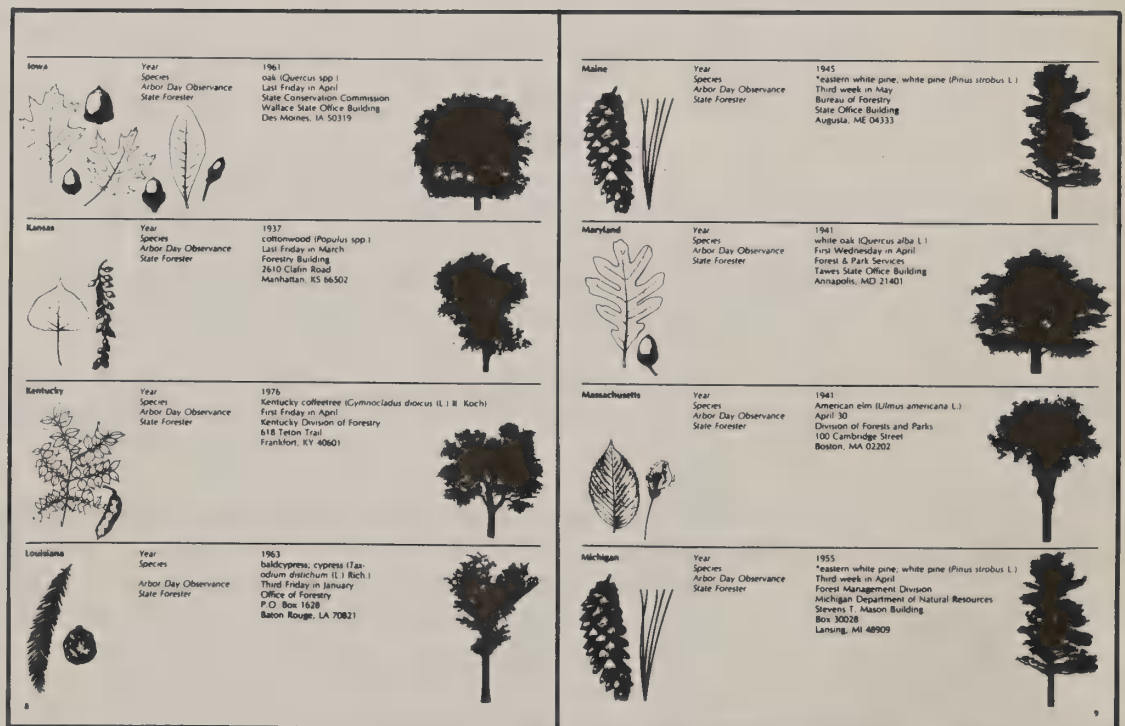
Design

In advertising, factors influencing readership include not only interest in the product being advertised and readability of the prose, but also the attention-getting qualities of illustration

and layout.(8) Certainly, to persuade an audience or to interpret a natural phenomenon for a group of visitors, you must first gain their attention, then hold it.(2) Individual factors affecting attention to a message include a person's permanent interests, immediate concerns, attitudes, opinions, and need satisfaction.(12)

Some ways of gaining viewer attention include the use of dominant size, striking design, white space, action, vivid color and color pictures, and distinctive style.(1,8,10,12,24,32) Adding color to a black-and-white ad increases the chance of attracting readers.(3) A big, colorful display stands a better chance of catching a visitor's attention than a small "gray" one.(8,11,19) So does an ad for an interesting product.(3) A surprise, or something startling, like a news bulletin interrupting a program, is effective.(12)

Pictures are good attention-getters, but they should, of course, be relevant to the story. The color of a picture and



NEATNESS AND SIMPLICITY. Species lists and trail leaflets often contain a lot of information that needs to be well organized and clearly presented. Above, the parallel format and use of rules visually organizes the material on each page and makes it easy for the reader to locate similar information in other parts of the publication. In addition to providing some essential information, the simple illustrations become a strong graphic element.

its size appear to be important variables; in one study, readership rose with color and fell as the number of words in the text rose above 50.(8) Both men and women are most attracted by pictures of children, groups of people, sports scenes, animals, and natural scenery.(25)

Position on a page is important.(12) An advertisement with a single dominant illustration at the top of a page, a picture with little or no text, pictures of equal size arranged regularly on a page, and closeups of faces or objects attract more readers than an ad with a picture on one side and text on the other or where pictures are scattered on the page.(1)

Red, yellow, and orange attract children. Young people like bright colors, particularly red, yellow, and orange. Older people prefer blue, red, and green.(10)

You can also attract attention by using motion and intense sense impressions -- sharp sounds, acute odors, surprising or startling effects, odd shapes, and objects set apart.(3,12) Also helpful are motion, contrast, novel stimuli, multisensory involvement, and surprise.(12)

But while these factors attract attention, people are most likely to take time to look at a visual field that they can understand easily.(3) So don't forget what is called the "no clutter" principle.(3) The presentation, therefore, should contain enough familiar symbols to make the message easily understood.(8) The message should be well designed and laid out according to basic design principles, including some discussed in this publication, and also be adequately framed and set off by sharp contrasts.(3,32)

Basic Graphic Principles

Form and Color

Viewers' eyes tend to travel clockwise when exploring graphic presentations because the human eye prefers to move horizontally rather than vertically. Vertical movements are tiring. The layout should lead the eye easily from beginning to end.(1)

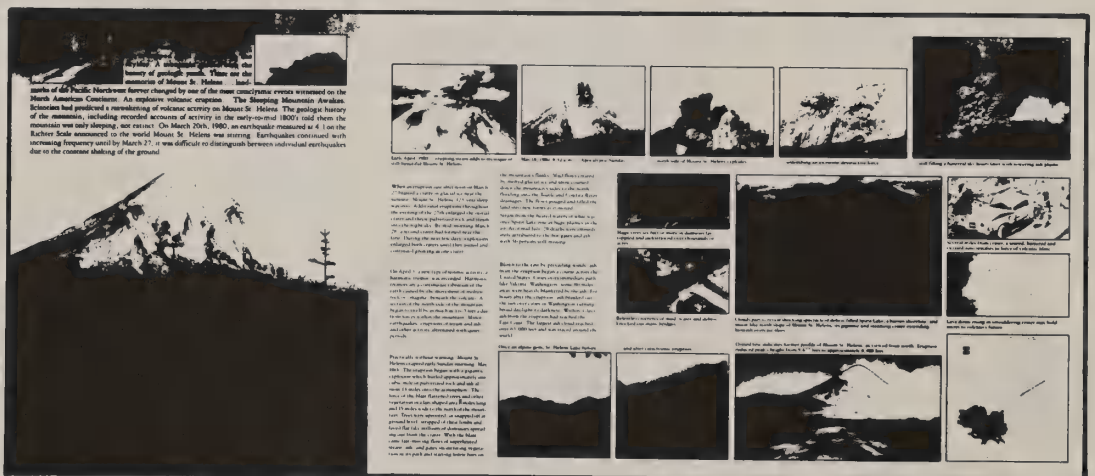
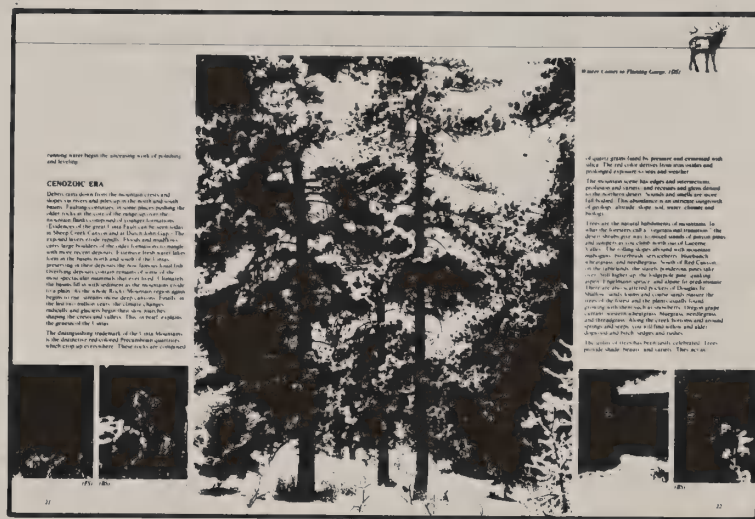
According to research, the more visually complex an ad, the longer people look at it, and the more easily they identify and remember the advertised product.(51) Subjects who take time to scan the most learn the most, but the ads that communicate most efficiently are those that get their messages across with little scanning.(53) In summary, a message that can be understood easily with little scanning is likely to be learned.

One characteristic of a good layout is the same optical intensity on both top and bottom. Remember that the optical center

of a page is usually above the geometric center; indeed, it is actually about five-eighths up the page.(32)

The most legible color combination is black on yellow, followed in descending order by green on white, red on white, blue on white, white on blue, black on white, red on yellow, green on red, and red on green.(10)

One of the quickest ways to get more readers is to enlarge the space a message occupies. This is because readership tends to



PICTURES AND WORDS. In both publications above, the story moves clockwise around the page, ending back at the text. Strong photos are the main communication element. They are supported by carefully written segments of text. Two pages from a booklet on the Flaming Gorge area of Wyoming and Utah (top) illustrate a highly symmetrical balance of the two design elements. A brochure on the recent history of Mount St. Helens (below) uses a more complicated layout in which the photos are arranged to follow the reader's natural eye movement from left to right.

increase in proportion to the square root of the size increase of the message. Thus, a message covering 4 square-inches is read by twice as many people as a message 1-inch square; a 16-inch message doubles the readership again. In magazine advertising, readership is highest on the cover and the first 10 percent of the pages. In the print media, people tend to look habitually at the top, rather than the bottom half of a page.(25) In newspaper advertising, the upper right-hand position is best when numerous ads compete for attention on the same page.(19)

Color not only increases the attention-getting qualities of a message, but also its holding power. In advertising, the other main functions of color are to convey realism (that is, to show things as they really are), create moods, and express beauty.(10,19)

Many factors, such as age, education, income, and locality, affect color preferences and associations. In marketing studies, both sexes tended to associate red with love, warmth, passion, excitement, fire, adventure, sex, and immorality; blue (and to a lesser extent, green) with calmness, coolness, comfort, tranquility, water, and lakes. They also associate green itself with country and restfulness; red, orange, and yellow with warmth, cheer, sunshine, and the quality of glowing; and gray with dignity and quiet.(10,20,60)

Women tend to associate white with the words "love," "romantic," and "calm," and yellow with laziness and warmth. Men associate red with hate or war.(60)

Specific color combinations may be more effective for advertising products than the traditional black-and-white combination. Research indicates that combinations of yellow and red tend to be preferred for a theme of excitement or romance, blue on green and yellow on blue for a calm or cool theme, and combinations of yellow and red for a warm or glowing theme.(60)

Line, Shape, Texture

You can use lines to create impressions. A horizontal line can evoke feelings of tranquility. A vertical line suggests impending action. A diagonal line has the quality of movement. Designers often use combinations of straight lines, curved lines, or both, to create symbols. The "red cross" is an obvious example of a straight-line symbol.(1)

Shapes and textures can connote gender. Round shapes are associated with femininity, angular shapes with masculinity. Trees, wool, and square objects seem more masculine, while

flowers, silk, and round objects are more feminine. Keep this in mind when you choose symbols or props for an exhibit or a graphic design.(1)

One study shows that even the eye direction of the subject in a photograph affects the viewer. When the subject looks to the right, rational and objective thoughts are reinforced in the viewer. Eyes directed toward the left reinforce emotional and subjective reactions. Enlarged pupil size indicates favorable attitudes toward others and thus stirs the viewer's interest.(30)

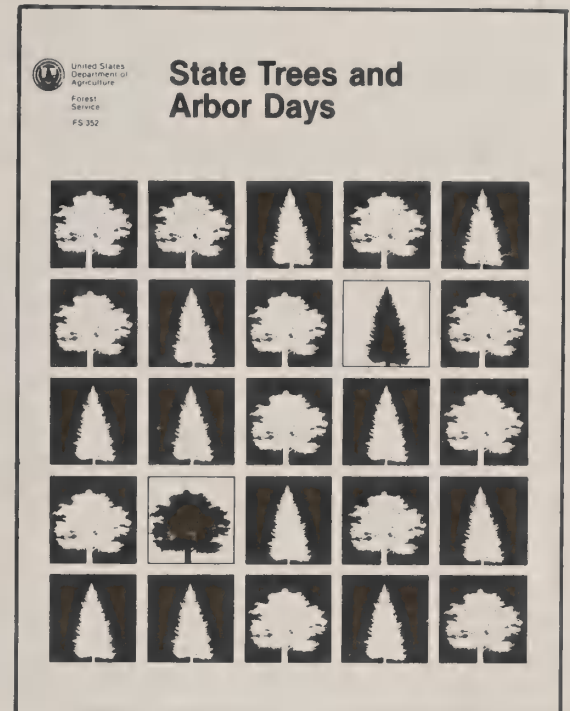
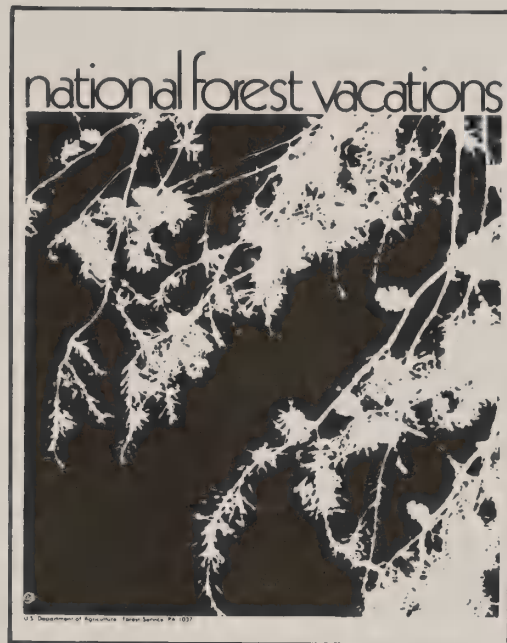
Effective Print Layouts

You may often be required to judge the effectiveness of a sign, pamphlet, or magazine-sized brochure. You may even want to design a publication to complement an interpretive program. In either case, you will want to know the best way to go about it.

Size, of course, is important. So is color. But content is king. Advertisers, for example, rate content as the most important single factor, followed by art work and layout.(1,5)

Here are the basic criteria of an effective print layout:

- (1) It is unified. It registers one, clear theme, and the completed layout creates a feeling of oneness.(1,20)
- (2) It is balanced. It achieves a formal (symmetrical), or informal (asymmetrical) balance.(26,32)
- (3) It is in proportion. The allocation of space among its elements achieves the desired optical effect.(20)
- (4) It uses contrast and proportion to gain the reader's attention.(20)
- (5) It is harmonious, that is, the parts of the layout are related.(20)
- (6) It leads the viewer through the message in the appropriate manner.(20,32)
- (7) It is arresting.(32)
- (8) It is distinctive.(20,32)
- (9) It is clear.(32)
- (10) It has an appropriate tone.(20)
- (11) It communicates the message quickly.(32)



CONTRAST AND PROPORTION. These covers illustrate the use of high-contrast art, a graphic technique particularly effective for publications that will be printed in only one or two colors. Many high-contrast, black and white photos can be adapted in this way. The covers also show two different concepts of proportion. At left, the closeup of the tree branches fills the page. At right, the size of each individual element -- different trees -- is reduced and the impact achieved through repetition.

- (12) It encourages the reader to read the entire message.(32)
- (13) The most important idea gets the most attention.(32)
- (14) It leaves the desired impression.(32)
- (15) It emphasizes the Forest Service name.(20)
- (16) You can leave nothing out without impairing the message.(32)

Text

Start with the text. Whether you are judging it or writing it, the message should be specific, interesting, believable, simple, relevant, and concise.(20) In advertising, copy with excessively large words and an impersonal tone tends to repel readers and makes the reader perceive something that is not so, or should not be so.(23,64)

If your message already has a headline or title, or if you plan to write one, remember that it should pull the reader into the text.(20) The length of a headline is not as important as its content.(20) It should be simple and easily understood, and should interact harmoniously with the general layout, including white space and illustrations.(1,64)

Typeface

Typefaces should be readable, projecting a mood compatible with your message. Words set in capitals and small letters are easier to read than words set in all capitals. Script faces are useful for setting a mood, but are more difficult to read than standard typefaces; they should be used sparingly. And remember, the best type size is one that enables the message to be read with one sweep of the eyes.(20)

Illustrations

Illustrations are not only attention getters but should be relevant to the story.(25) They should work well with the type on the page.(1) Illustrations placed above a title or headline attract and hold attention effectively only when the illustration is the dominant element in the layout, photography is used instead of art work, people or objects are pictured in proper proximity, and the colors are vivid.(20) Indeed, an illustration and its headline should be viewed as an entity,(1) and captions should accompany any art that needs explanation.

Effective Television Presentations

In general, many of the design criteria for print layouts apply to television productions. For example, audio bears much the same relationship to video as captions bear to print illustrations. Thus in video with audio, the words should interpret the picture and advance the thought, not waste effort describing what is obvious in the picture. The video in turn should carry most of the weight of communication, and the audio should be brief, uncomplicated, and as economical as possible.(32)

Television is a closeup medium, and long shots are generally inappropriate. Smooth, flowing transitions between scenes make the message easier for the viewer to follow. Too many static scenes are boring and wasteful, and should be kept to the minimum required for camera movement and scene changes.(32) Studies show that the best TV presentations use strategies that prevent attention from being diverted, and then present a clear message.(67) In every case, however, the audiovisual program must be well designed, well executed, and well integrated in the overall presentation at your facility.(31)

Effective Audio Presentations

Audio messages, of course, should also be meaningful and well presented, not complex, repetitive, dull, or vague. They can and should arouse thoughts and feelings in the listener that

Effective
Multimedia
Presentations

relate to your interpretive product and identify it with the Forest Service.(32) The opportunities for inexpensive, creative presentations on radio or over an audio system are broad.

Multimedia presentations enable you to establish a mood and create many sensory impressions simultaneously.(55) A variety of audiovisual forms can be used together or in mixed-media productions. Videotape provides instant feedback. Continuous film loops repeat a message over and over. In story-line films, usually used with exhibits, the message is primarily carried on film; it is expensive, but may be worth the cost because it can be customized for a specific purpose.(31)

Slides are one of the least expensive and most versatile of the visual media. A so-called dissolve unit that merges slides during transitions from one slide to another can be particularly effective. Illuminated slide transparencies can create a wide variety of backgrounds and can be used over and over again. Opaque and overhead projectors can create mood and atmosphere effects. Creative use of lighting and sound can provide a wide range of special effects.(31)

In one study, students in a large class responded very favorably to use of the multimedia as an educational tool. They perceived the format as more colorful, interesting, meaningful, and successful than a standard lecture format without multimedia.(9)

But be careful not to overdo a multimedia presentation. In other words, the media shouldn't override the message.(5) Evaluate a medium's potential, whether it is to be used singly or in combination with other media forms, in terms of whether or not it contributes to the clarity of your message.(5) If you are careful, you will find it also useful as a method of enhancing a lecture, or even substituting for a lecturer.(55)

Here are a few guidelines for planning multimedia presentations:

- (1) Establish objectives.(55)
- (2) Develop a conceptual framework and outline the specific topics to be covered within each conceptual area. Don't try to include everything.(55)
- (3) Fit specific topics to available media. Decide which topics would be best suited for visual or aural communication in the context of the equipment available.(55)
- (4) Integrate the media into the presentation. Draw up a cue sheet or storyboard indicating the order of appearance of

slides or other media, and also relate them to the text.(55)

- (5) Decide on the physical presentation of the material. You can show it sequentially, simultaneously, or at random. Simultaneous and random presentation are best for creating a multisensory experience. Random presentation works best for presentations without a lecturer, especially when three or more screens are used. Sequential presentation enhances a lecture because it helps maintain structure.(55)
- (6) Develop a method for obtaining audience feedback and for evaluating your effectiveness in meeting your objectives.(4)

Effective Exhibits

Exhibits are a way to bring all the components of a multimedia presentation together. They not only attract attention, but people prefer them.

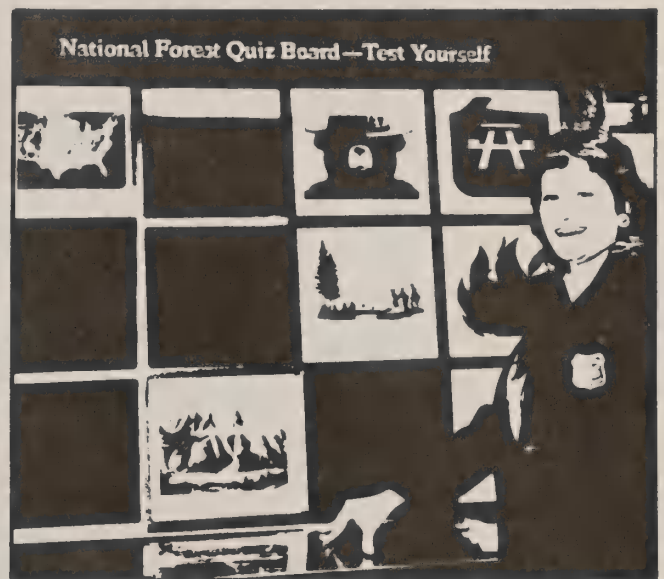
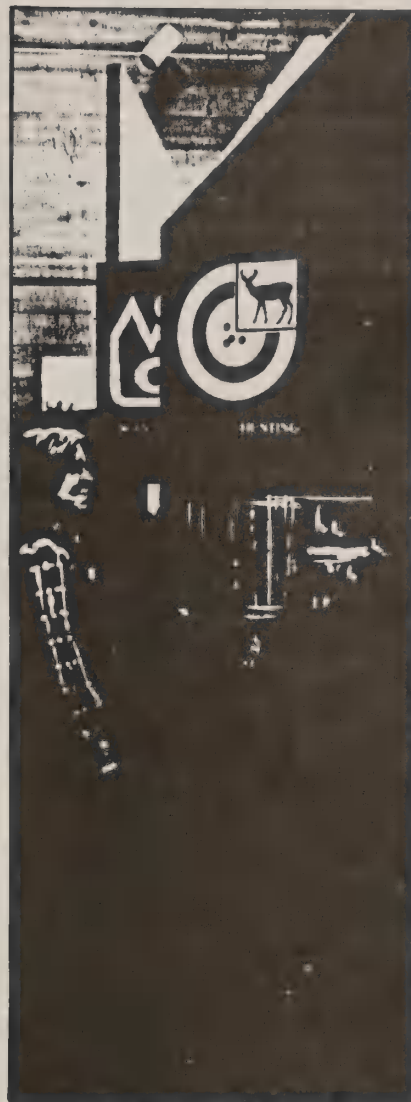
Before you start developing an exhibit, set up clear-cut objectives in terms that are measurable. In this way you will be able to follow up on the results and evaluate the exhibit's effectiveness.(52) And when you have put it all together, test it with an audience before setting it in place to make certain it evokes the reaction you want.(29)

The most effective exhibits make a particular effort to attract attention. A scenic background significantly increases the number of people who stop to look at a display. But don't make the attraction an attention-getting gimmick. It should actually help tell the story.(21) Exhibits also gain audience attention if they are of dominant size and position and use novelty, surprise, motion, intensity, contrast, shape, and background to the best advantage.(12,24,32)

One study of five U.S. Army exhibits evaluated visitor reactions to messages conveyed by different media. The findings showed that a combination slide and audio show in an enclosed environment was preferred to and even better remembered than the same show in an unenclosed area. In addition, both a movie and enclosed, walk-in show were rated as more informative than still pictures, exhibits, and the unenclosed show. (However, there was no consistent relationship between informativeness and recall. Best recall was in the walk-in slide and audio show and an exhibit of color transparencies with printed text.)(29)

Good exhibits involve people emotionally, mentally, and physically -- in all three ways if possible.(15) For the best

results, mixed-media presentations should be experienced in a totally controlled environment. Heighten audience involvement by creating an illusion, establishing a tone, and cutting out extraneous light and noise. A total environment that contributes to the basic theme is especially useful. For example, simulate a realistic environment such as a forest. Or expand the exhibit scale by putting the exhibit inside a leaf.(31)



EXHIBITS. At the Sawtooth National Recreation Area (left) in Ketchum, Idaho, staggered exhibit panels use a combination of bold graphic symbols, color photos, and easy-to-read white type on a dark background. The dramatically lit arrangement of information panels at the Mammoth Visitors Center (top right) in the California National Forest invites the viewer to move around and through the exhibit area. At the Asheville, N.C., facility (bottom right), a "quiz board" communicates information by involving the viewer in a game situation.

One way to create an exhibit environment free from distraction is to allow disinterested viewers to leave without disturbing others. In exhibits with a major audiovisual segment, pre-scribe times for people to enter the enclosure so that programs are viewed from start to finish; people who enter in the middle rarely remain to see missed portions.(29)

Pinpoint the story you want to tell. Are you going to be focusing on the features, benefits, or applications of your interpretive product outside the facility? Or will you be pointing up new developments, design, or applications at your facility? Perhaps you will be identifying special features of your area or interpretive services.(21)

The exhibit should deliver a message, not just be entertaining. The story-line should be developed with the overall exhibit purpose in mind. Consider participatory and "total immersion" exhibits -- for example, going into a coal mine or submarine -- to get a high degree of visitor involvement. The message itself should be kept to no more than six points, be well-organized, succinctly stated, and never implied or left to the imagination. And build something you can maintain.

Here are some other guidelines for developing an exhibit:

- (1) Determine the story or message you want to get across.(15)
- (2) Use a variety of sources to glean presentation ideas, but be selective in your final choices.(15)
- (3) Keep the message simple, getting the most important points across by focusing on only a few ideas rather than many.(15,21)
- (4) Try to come up with new ways to get people involved in the exhibit.(15)
- (5) Let the exhibit tell the story by itself, continuously, without intermittent "shows" or word-of-mouth explanations.(21)
- (6) Make every important element in your exhibit function to communicate your message.(21)
- (7) Simplify the exhibit. Remove every distracting or non-functional element from your plan.(21)
- (8) Make it as easy as possible for the visitor to absorb and remember your message.(21)

- (9) Use animation as much as possible to help tell the story. But ask yourself first if the animation actually helps tell the story.(21)
- (10) Clearly spell out every feature and benefit of your message. Do not leave key points to the imagination.(21)
- (11) Demonstrate the features and benefits of your message if possible. Avoid dependence on illustration alone.(21)
- (12) Point out clear applications of the principles you are trying to communicate.(21)
- (13) Unify the exhibit so that it will not give the impression of being a disorganized display of unrelated miscellaneous elements.(21)
- (14) Make certain that all statements in your interpretation are believable, immediately acceptable, and demonstrable.(21)
- (15) Maintain high standards of quality in both visuals and graphics used in your exhibit.(31)
- (16) Pare down your message. Make it clear and specific.(31)
- (17) Do not make the exhibit too elaborate, particularly if it is a multimedia presentation. In other words, the medium should not overwhelm the message; keep the message comprehensible.(5)
- (18) Have one person coordinate the exhibit's planning and execution.(31)

In choosing colors for an exhibit, consider both the items to be displayed and the intended audience. Representations of objects should be realistic, although you can use background colors according to the audience you want to attract. For example, the background of a forest-products exhibit is frequently printed in brown. But if it is intended for children, the background color might be yellow. If the audience will be primarily adult, the background might be blue. In any case, background colors should complement those of the display items without dominating them.(10)

4. THE ENVIRONMENT

Part of the task of getting someone to listen to what you have to say is placing your message in a favorable setting. This means you must create a mood or tone that will be conducive not only to receiving your message but to accepting it. This is why we describe "atmosphere" or "environment" in sensory terms -- that is, what people see, hear, smell, and feel all contribute to general impressions or feelings toward a person, place, or thing.

By creating a mood or tone, you are designing or maintaining an atmosphere that serves as an attention-creating, message-creating, and emotion-creating medium for your message. The environment in which an exhibit is presented, for example, may be as crucial as the presentation itself.(29)

Atmosphere can be positive or negative, and each can communicate important information to visitors. For example, a person may fondly remember a visit to a barn in a restored village, where the sights and smells of animals, hay, and leather mingle to create strong positive feelings. The same person visiting a jail in the same village will probably remember a small, bleak building with heavy iron bars and doors, a room with sparse, crude furnishings. There the atmosphere is one of privation, coldness, and a generally inhospitable environment. If you increase visitors' sensory involvement, you affect their experiences emotionally.

Working within cost limitations, interior design planning therefore has four objectives:

- (1) To create an attractive and comfortable atmosphere for consumers.(11)
- (2) To insure that the overall interior atmosphere and the impression it creates enhances the marketing strategy.(11)
- (3) To provide maximum flexibility to adjust to seasonal changes and future developments and modifications of layout arrangements.(11)
- (4) To provide maximum inducement for consumers to do all their shopping in this one place.(11)

To meet these objectives, choose color and interior finishes that heighten attractiveness and influence the apparent size of an enclosed area, enhance visual appeal of a display, or increase or decrease the lighting required. Lighting and lighting fixtures should be coordinated with the general color scheme and building design to create the intended atmos-

phere.(11,12) Lighting can also brighten the entire interior and complement the predominant color tone of displays and exhibits.

By varying lighting, you can also emphasize special areas or displays.(10,11,12,48) And the interplay of lighting with color, lines, furnishings, and motion can arouse attention and interest.(11) Restaurants are obvious examples. They use music, lighting, and interior furnishings, as well as food, to create distinctive atmospheres.

The perceived amount of personal space can affect whether a person remains in your facility or in an area of the facility, because people respond to cues provided in space. Some marketers would even view a Forest Service facility as an indoor shopping mall, with the space in the facility capable of being designed and programmed to create desired impressions, atmosphere, and reactions.(11,48)

People generally react positively to an environment they perceive as being desirable, nonthreatening, and comfortable. Dim lighting, sound-deadening materials such as carpets and acoustical materials, and reduced traffic in the peripheral field of vision all reduce a sense of crowding.(11,19,48) Color can make a facility feel wider; uncluttered aisles convey a relaxed, browsing tone.(12) Some space design, however, tends to divide, separate, or disperse people.(48) High counters, for example, can be threatening.(12) Thus by considering the needs and preferences of consumers, interpreters can vary design features to shape or modify use at their facility.

The lobby is the first internal space to create an impression of your facility. If used effectively, it can get the visitor so involved in your product or service that everything else is forgotten. It can also identify the different Forest Service divisions to the visitors.(7)

Beyond the lobby, you can rely on one of four basic layouts:

- (1) Grid layout, as in a supermarket.(23)
- (2) Inclined, or angular layout, an arrangement where the secondary and tertiary aisles are angled to the main aisle.(23)
- (3) Free-flow layout, which is the use of rounded, flowing corners.(23)
- (4) Shoppe concept, where merchandise is grouped according to use.(23)

As visitors head toward an exhibit, you may want to intercept them and channel them through some other areas so that your other interpretive products will also receive attention. If you want to get people to walk between displays, remember that the grid pattern makes for the best balance of product exposure and use of floor space. Some marketers, however, believe the grid is monotonous and makes it difficult to create a distinctive personality for a facility. An inclined layout permits great visibility, but loses some floor space. A free-flow layout provides the most customized appearance and greatest variability in aisle widths.(23,46)

To get to where they want to go, 70 to 90 percent of people follow a path along the perimeter of an area. No more than 50 percent go into interior aisles. For this reason, perimeter aisles are usually wider than other aisles because they carry more traffic.(23,46)

You can also use atmosphere to hold people's attention at exhibits or to arouse feelings appropriate to the area that you wish to interpret. For instance, you might want to design an exhibit showing how wildlife dwells in the forest throughout the day and night. One way would be to simulate a 24-hour period by varying the amount of light in the exhibit and focusing attention sequentially -- first on species that are most active in the early morning, then during the day and at twilight, and finally during the night. Furthermore, you could concentrate on animals common to the forest you are interpreting. The simple involvement of even a single sense helps learning, not only by communicating more information to visitors, but by sensitizing the viewer to what goes on in the environment outside the visitor center.

Here are four steps that you can use in planning an atmosphere:

- (1) As always, define your audience.(15,36)
- (2) Decide the message you want to get across and what the audience will be seeking to gain from the experience.(15,36)
- (3) Determine which atmospheric variables -- color, sound, scent, texture -- can enhance the audience's experience.(15,36)
- (4) Evaluate the effectiveness of the created atmosphere.(15,36)

And, not so incidentally, don't forget that you can create atmosphere outside as well as inside a facility. Outside

lighting not only adds to the beauty and image of the facility, but also provides safety and security for the visitor.(12)

Size, shape, and building materials contribute to an exterior image that can prepare visitors for the experiences they will gain inside.(12) The front of the building is important because it is the first part of the building people come in contact with. Its shape communicates subtly; people may visit one facility with a warm, inviting atmosphere and avoid another one that projects a cool, aloof image. Physical size can communicate strength, power, and security. The building materials can convey an image of wealth or hardship, realism or futurism, high or low cost.(12)

Thus, the atmosphere inside and outside a Forest Service facility can be a valuable tool in helping to interpret the facility's services. Indeed, just by sensing the atmosphere, a visitor can often better understand the facility. The trick is to involve the visitors emotionally, intellectually, and physically. You can do this with a total environment that you control visually, aurally, olfactorily, and tactilely.(36)

If you have done the job effectively, the result will be to immerse the visitors in a situation that makes them forget everything else but your interpretive message, and the overall atmosphere will create an impression that serves to enhance your total marketing strategy.(36,57)

5. REDISTRIBUTING VISITOR USE

Interpreters, who usually strive to interest the public in their subjects, often find themselves faced with overpopular trails, activities, or exhibits. Reducing or shifting visitor use temporarily or permanently can become a major management objective.(34,35)

For example, some guided activities produce a heavy visitor demand only on weekends or during specific seasons. In these peak periods you might promote very popular activities during low-use times or tailor your services to favor light times. Or you might offer unusual programs during off-peak times to encourage greater use in slow periods. In your brochures, you could give it less coverage, describe some negative aspects, or even say nothing about it and let people discover it on their own. Meanwhile, you can emphasize other features of your facility.(37)

Chronic overpopularity throughout the year might involve redistributing visitor use permanently. For example, conducted tours of a unique or fragile resource may be continually oversubscribed. In such a case, you might give fewer tours each day, decrease the size of tour groups, or offer the most popular tours during the least busy time of the day or week. In some cases, you may have to discontinue conducted tours and replace them with other activities.

You might also:

- (1) Modify the content of messages about the activities. For example, rather than describe a tour in detail in a brochure, give it less coverage. Enumerate some of its negative elements. Or say nothing about it and let people discover it on their own.(37)
- (2) Stop advertising the tour, or talk less about it in orientation programs.(37)
- (3) Cut back on the amount of time that personnel spend interpreting a feature you want to deemphasize.(37)
- (4) Increase the time and effort that a person will have to expend to see a feature or obtain a service. For example, you might lengthen a nature walk or talk.(37)
- (5) Reduce the number of places in which you provide a service. For example, offer naturalist talks in one rather than several locations.(37)
- (6) Increase the price. Charge a greater admission fee for the activity or feature you want to deemphasize.(37)

But be careful. Approach decisions to redistribute visitor use with caution, taking into account the affect on both visitors and on management objectives.(37) If you try to shift use in one area, you might raise the demand for other activities or services. Or your efforts may backfire, resulting in increased demand for the already overpopular service. People may feel that something costing more or requiring greater effort is the most important thing to see or do in the area and will tolerate any inconvenience to take advantage of it.(37)

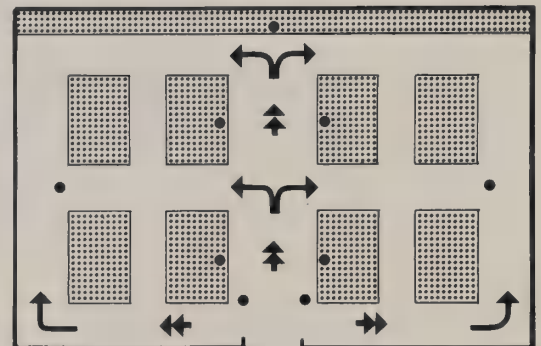
Further, consider the ethics of what you decide. Your efforts at deemphasizing something might unintentionally discriminate against a group or groups of visitors. Increasing the length or changing the route of a conducted walk, for instance, might discourage people with physical handicaps or families with very young children.

Indeed, at all times -- whether you're serving a market or building one, demarketing or unselling -- remember that the message is most effective when you take current public attitudes into consideration, are fair and accurate in your presentation, and clearly state what you want the visitors to do.(6)

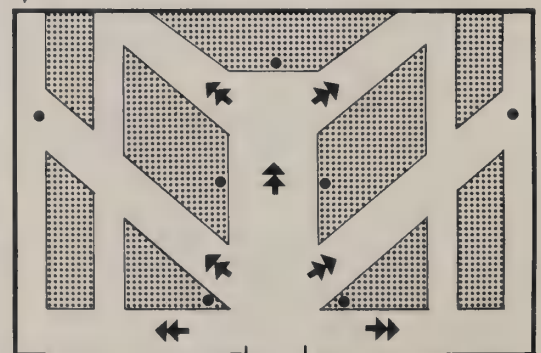
6. MESSAGE PLACEMENT

Retailers have found that some places in their stores attract more people and are better than others for promoting products.(46,48) Forces at work on consumer behavior include traffic patterns, display height, and the distance between facing displays. The placement of special promotional aids -- known in marketing as "point-of-purchase displays" -- can also be important.(19) They are useful in fostering actions the customer didn't have in mind when entering the store.(4)

Studies indicate that point-of-purchase display materials affect both consumer awareness and purchase behavior. They give the consumers a special opportunity that may not be repeated. In one study of test displays, 82 percent of the respondents recalled seeing at least two of the displays during shopping trips, 44 percent used displays as guides to what they bought, and 33 percent purchased one or more displayed items.



Grid



Angular

USING SPACE EFFECTIVELY. At the Forest Service facility, Flaming Gorge, Utah, (left), flexible, well-designed seating is logically placed near entrance to a movie. The eye-level information mural functions as an excellent point-of-purchase display. It is large enough to attract from a distance and gives important information about the "product." Simplified store layouts (right) show two common aisle and counter arrangements. Circles indicate some of the best selling and display areas: at entrance, along main aisle, and at the end of aisles. Arrows show heaviest traffic flow.

In another study comparing normal shelf sales with point-of-purchase displays, the displays with motion increased sales by 83 percent, the ones without motion averaged a gain of 37 percent.(19)

Suppose you want to increase attendance at a naturalist program and are concerned about where to place a promotional sign or display for maximum exposure. Research suggests you should put it by the front entrance,(11) at the end of an aisle,(23,27,46) on an information countertop, or as a clip-on sign on an exhibit, tying it in with the program. Like retail shoppers, visitors who notice your special sign or display are likely to attend a program you are promoting or take some other action you recommend.

Retail research has also shown that:

- (1) The front of a merchandising area is the most valuable space in one-floor stores. Effectiveness tends to decline as you move away from the front entrance.(11)
- (2) The difficulty of getting customers into a selling area increases with each successive floor. This is due not only to the greater vertical distance to be travelled from the front door but also because traffic naturally thins out as areas become more remote.(11)
- (3) Displays placed at the ends of aisles or where they will catch the perimeter traffic are highly effective.(23,27,46) They are exposed to 70 to 90 percent of the traffic flow. Studies show, however, that if the displays are not real attention-getters, visitors hurrying from one aisle to the next will pass them by.(46)
- (4) Pilferage is less at end-of-the-aisle locations than within an aisle or at a checkout station.(27)
- (5) Aisle width or distance between displays facing each other can influence whether people look at exhibits on both sides. It should be 6 to 7 feet wide for viewing ease. A perimeter aisle is usually 9 to 10 feet wide.(46)
- (6) If the elements of an exhibit must be seen in a special rather than random order, do some traffic flow studies and design or redesign your space and traffic flow accordingly.(46)

Use space efficiently. People will examine both sides of an aisle if materials with drawing power are strategically

placed.(46) The more packages on shelves facing the consumer, for example, the more packages the store sells.(26) In another analysis of the effect of shelf position on sales for a popular grocery product, investigations found that within a range of 5 to 10 rows of shelf space, adding a row increased weekly sales in high-volume stores. It did not increase sales in low-volume stores. Container size had no effect; shelf height had only a modest influence.(22)

In another study, sales varied with eye level. For adults, all marketing messages are best placed at eye level, followed by waist, knee, and ankle level, in that order. The bottom shelf is most effective for young children.(19)

Use island displays cautiously. They tend to divert traffic flow into only one side of the aisle, possibly causing congestion and reducing exposure to your products on the other side of the aisle.(46)

Customers must understand their roles in a self-service system. Visitors should always be able to locate what they are looking for easily and to move about without encountering congestion or confusion. Help them with wide aisles for leisurely browsing, exhibits that can be viewed comfortably, animated displays that they can operate themselves, and signs and announcements that direct them to specific items or services. Make certain that all aspects of self-selection or self-instruction displays help visitors help themselves.(57)

7. PROMOTING IDEAS AND CAUSES

In social marketing, practitioners hope to make people aware of an issue or idea and to motivate people to accept or use it as a guiding principle in their lives or work. Commercial marketing specialists, therefore, refer to the concept of persuasion, or promoting ideas or causes, as "social marketing." (39,45)

The ideas or causes involved are often services such as health or educational programs, or issues such as environmental protection. The intent is to bring about a change in a segment of society or in society as a whole. Interpreters can use similar techniques to influence people's awareness, beliefs, attitudes, or behavior to achieve Forest Service goals that may benefit the public. (39)

For example, interpretive programming aimed at promoting the need for energy conservation, protecting endangered wildlife, preserving wilderness areas, and eliminating littering all use marketing techniques to further social concerns. Through educational programs or exhibits that show the need for concern about these causes, an organization may strive to enhance people's understanding of the issues.

The desired level of concern or action may vary. While one organization may seek only to inform people about a topic, another may try to change attitudes or promote a specific behavior, such as writing to a public official or picking up litter.

On a broader basis, Forest Service interpreters also use the social marketing concept to accomplish such tasks as preserving unique and often irreplaceable resources. Thus, they hope people participating in their programs will develop a stronger desire to maintain, protect, preserve, or expand cultural, historic, and natural resources for the benefit of future generations. Using traditional marketing concepts of product, price, place, and promotion, a marketing planning approach can offer a useful framework for effective social planning. (39)

One study shows that marketing an altruistic course may, at times, best be accomplished with minimum emphasis on altruism. (14) Other research indicates that if you're promoting such a cause and the audience already favors the issue, you need only present the pro side to be effective. You should present both sides of an issue if you do not detect a strong opinion among an educated audience, or if the audience appears critical of the issue or even opposed to it. (4)

Your efforts at promoting ideas and causes will be more effective if you:

- (1) Know your audience's attitudes. (6)

- (2) Use a positive rather than a negative tone.(6)
- (3) Present both sides of the argument about the issues.(6)
- (4) Spell out clearly the ways in which people can become involved in specific problem solving.(6)

8. EVALUATION

Consumer perceptions influence disposition toward current and future marketing efforts not only by your facility but by the entire Forest Service. Thus, to determine the success of your interpretive marketing programs, evaluation of visitor reaction is essential. Such analysis will help you assess the kinds of images that people have about your facility, how they choose among different activities, and the benefits they obtain from visiting. Some of the ways to get continuous feedback are through visitor observation, personal discussions, and traffic flow studies.(35,38,46)

Traffic flow studies, for example, can be used to identify consumer reactions to physical features and arrangements of exhibits and reveal traffic bottlenecks. They enable you to modify present patterns and provide a basis for future planning.

Observe your visitors. Note such demographic factors as the sex, number in party, and approximate ages. Where did the visitors go? What did they do? How long did they stay? Much of the information can be recorded on a layout sheet, detailed to show locations of department, display areas, restrooms, etc., with arrows indicating the direction of travel and crosses indicating where stops are made, and observations about such problems as bottlenecks.(46)

Ask yourself if your facility meets three basic layout considerations.

- (1) Maximum exposure for interpretive products. Don't forget that exposure can be affected by location of departments, arrangement of displays, and location of products within displays.(46)
- (2) Customers can move easily to find what they need without encountering congestion and confusion.(46)
- (3) Facility operating costs reflect the efficient use of space.(46)

You will want to reinforce favorable impressions to attract potential users. You will want to stay alert to changing trends and patterns. You will want to audit your own objectives periodically. By getting to know visitors and considering their needs and purposes, you will be able to shape or modify the features of your facility.

Remember that a good word passed along from one satisfied visitor to friends is the most effective method of letting people know that coming to your facility is an interesting, inexpensive, and fun thing to do. In the end, it is your visitor who is your most potent marketing device.(4,40)

9. DEVELOPING AN INTERPRETIVE PROGRAM ANALYSIS

Before you make any program decisions, you should develop an interpretive program analysis. Such an analysis provides a framework for achieving your objectives by examining who is interested in your services and how you can best allocate those services or resources to satisfy both visitor and agency desires.

In marketing, this process is called developing a marketing analysis. Experts consider it a basic step for planning effective marketing strategy and action. It is composed of a market structure analysis and a consumer analysis. Stated simply, a market structure analysis defines your product, describes who wants it, and specifies the best way to market it. How you do this depends on your consumer analysis, that is, your understanding of the needs and preferences of your visitor groups.

Market Structure Analysis

A market structure analysis has four components: market definition, market segmentation, market positioning, and market orchestration.

Market definition defines the concepts, resources, or services you wish to provide or interpret, as well as the visitors you hope to reach.

Market segmentation further defines your consumers by dividing people into fairly homogeneous user groups, any one of which you might select as an intended audience.

Market positioning identifies the position or niche of your product or service within your total Forest Service, recreation, or interpretive program. This niche is determined by the amount of interest in the product or service compared to other program offerings. For example, visitors to your area may be more interested in an orientation movie than in interpretive talks, in hiking rather than hunting.

Market orchestration looks at how your product or service can best be presented to the group or groups most interested, and how much of the products or services you will supply, for example, the number of interpretive talks per day or week.

Consumer Analysis

Once you have determined who is in the market for your product and selected your target groups, you will want to know all you can about their needs, perceptions, preferences, and satisfactions. This involves a consumer analysis. What kinds of

Note: The discussion in this chapter is based on Kotler (35). See especially chapters 6 and 7.

images do people have about your conducted walks -- interesting, boring, primarily for children, et cetera? Or, how do people choose between alternatives, such as deciding to join a conducted walk rather than exploring an area alone? Finally, what kinds of benefits are different user groups obtaining from your conducted walks -- like information, entertainment, exercise, relaxation, et cetera? All this information is useful in making decisions about allocating, promoting, and presenting interpretive or recreation activities.

To illustrate, let us compare taped cassette tours and interpretive talks. While tapes may be available for walking or auto tours, the interpretive talks could be presented on walks, in auditoriums, or around evening campfires. Both are popular but may appeal to different user groups.

The tapes may appeal especially to visitors who prefer driving or walking at their own pace, touring in their own cars, or touring alone or in small groups, or those who like being able to play back missed information.

Interpretive talks may appeal more to visitors who prefer participating in activities with informed guides or with other people or who like choosing from a greater diversity of subject matter. Being able to assess the group size and who comprises the interested visitor groups for each of these products and why they are interested can help you decide how many tapes and talks to provide. It will also help you promote and present them to reach specific audiences and attract potential users.

The appendix provides an example of an interpretive program analysis for interpretive talks on National Forests that could help you gather the kinds of information that can be obtained from developing such a marketing analysis. The example is hypothetical and does not analyze naturalist talks in any specific national forest. The intent is only to show how such an analysis might be made and its usefulness in helping you meet your interpretive goals. Data for such an analysis can be obtained in a variety of ways, including visitor observations or informal, personal discussions.

In summary, planning an effective interpretation effort consists of the following steps.

- (1) Define your product in terms of basic consumer needs to be met.(38)
- (2) Define your target groups.(38)

- (3) If serving more than one group, differentiate your efforts.(38)
- (4) Develop a consumer-behavior analysis similar to the one in the appendix. It will help you get to know the needs and preferences of your visitors.(38)
- (5) Seek a differential advantage, that is, whenever possible identify and highlight the uniqueness of your product.(38)
- (6) Reach out to your audience with many tools in many ways -- through your staff, brochure, signs, films, tours, etc.(38)
- (7) Integrate your interpretive plan so that all your tools are coordinated and do not work at cross purposes.(38)
- (8) Get continuous feedback. Evaluate how you are doing.(38)
- (9) Perform a periodic audit of your facility's objectives, resources, and opportunities. Be ready to make changes when needed.(38)

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PART A: Market Structure Analysis

I. Market Definition -- Defines both your product and who is or might be in the market for your product. Possible market relationships are:

- A. No Market -- No interaction between the product's attributes and people's desires. Implies visitors have no interest in naturalist talks.
- B. Potential Market -- People who can become interested in acquiring or consuming a product under the right circumstances. Could include visitors who:
 - 1. Are first time or repeat visitors to the area.
 - 2. Want to learn more about the area generally or specifically.
 - 3. Like to participate in conducted activities.
 - 4. Like structured activities.
 - 5. Want to be entertained.
 - 6. Enjoy personal contact with an identifiable agency member (like Forest Service personnel in uniform).
- C. Actual Market -- People who are strongly attracted to the product and either plan to consume or currently are using the product. Market includes:
 - 1. Current participants.
 - 2. Visitors intending to participate.

II. Market Segmentation -- Further defines your intended audience or target market. Application of segmenting variables to naturalist talks include:

- A. Geographic -- Knowledge of geographic variables could help naturalists:
 - 1. Better understand the relationship visitors have to the area generally and their talk specifically, that is
 - a. Whether visitors come from all over the country or principally from local region, or

- b. Whether visitors are urban, suburban, or rural in orientation.
 2. Determine the focus of interpretive programs.
 3. Better relate to visitors by anticipating possible needs and questions.
- B. Demographic -- Knowledge of these variables could help naturalists:
 1. Determine sex, age, occupation, et cetera, of visitor groups who use provided facilities and services.
 2. Better assess who is able or wants to participate in talks.
 3. Better understand who may have the ability to comprehend and understand the information given in the talks.
 4. Make better use of techniques that facilitate attention and recall of information.
 5. Determine which age groups may benefit the most from participating.
- C. Psychographic -- Knowledge of these variables may be very important in determining a more in-depth understanding of visitors' wants or needs (especially why they participate) critical in designing, focusing, and implementing programs. This in turn may greatly affect visitors' immediate reactions and future attitudes toward the same or similar facilities and services.

III. Market Positioning -- Identifies your product's niche, that is, where it can make its own distinctive program contribution. Application of market positioning in naturalist talks includes considering the role of naturalist talks in your overall interpretive program. A variety of questions can be asked such as:

- A. Compared to other activities, how interested are visitors in your naturalist talks?
- B. Which types of talks are oversubscribed, undersubscribed, or attracting the desired group size?
- C. Is the intended audience being reached?

- D. Can potential user groups also be reached, given some modifications in the talks?

IV. Market Orchestration -- Looks at how your product can best be marketed to the groups most interested, and how much of the product you will supply. Application of market orchestration in naturalist talks means knowing the intended audiences and the demand for naturalist talks. This information is crucial to deciding how much to supply in relation to other program efforts. In presenting talks, this information can also help naturalists:

- A. Select materials for programs and talks.
- B. Determine the educational level of the presentation necessary for maximum understanding by visitors.
- C. Decide on the layout for hikes and walks, considering factors like distance, trail condition and slope.
- D. Determine the best way to get the message across.
- E. Focus on the style of presentation, considering factors such as amount of time needed, day or night situation, et cetera.

PART B: Consumer Analysis

I. Needs -- The focal point for preparing meaningful offerings, identifying consumer needs includes knowing all you can about:

- A. What people interested in naturalist talks want.
- B. How this differs from needs of consumers of other interpretive products you offer.
- C. Monitoring need changes over time to keep your naturalist talks responsive to your target groups.

II. Perceptions -- Understanding how people view an organization and its interpretive products is important because consumer perceptions and images influence their disposition toward the organization's offering. For example, image can affect how people:

- A. Feel about your products and whether they choose to consume them, like attending naturalist talks.
- B. Compare your organization's interpretive programming to that of other organizations.

- III. Preferences -- Understanding why people choose to participate in naturalist talks over other interpretive offerings can help you build in the attributes that will maximize the attractiveness of naturalist talks to both specific audiences and potential user groups. Understanding consumer preferences can help you:
- A. Distinguish different visitor preference groups.
 - B. Plan and present products and services to meet the different preferences of various target groups.
 - C. Deal with any resistance or negative preference expressed for the product.
 - D. Watch for changes in preferences over time in order to adjust your products and services.
- IV. Satisfactions -- It is necessary to periodically measure how satisfied people are with your naturalist talks. Periodic feedback can help keep your talks responsive to meeting visitor needs and expectations.



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